

Eastern Illinois University The Keep

Fall 2006

2006

Fall 8-15-2006

ENG 3009G-004: Myth and Culture

C Wharram

Eastern Illinois University

Follow this and additional works at: http://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_fall2006

Recommended Citation

Wharram, C, "ENG 3009G-004: Myth and Culture" (2006). *Fall 2006*. 108.
http://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_fall2006/108

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the 2006 at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Fall 2006 by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.

English 3009G-004: MYTH and CULTURE**Fall 2006 / TTh 11:00-12:15 / Coleman 3609****Instructor: C.C. Wharram****Email: ccwharram@eiu.edu****Office: 3010 Coleman, 217-581-6318****Office Hours: MW 11:00-12:00; TTh 12:15-13:15****Mailbox: Coleman 3155****Course Description**

This class will serve as an introduction to myth, but not as a survey of myths from around the globe. There are some 300 000 languages spoken on the earth today, each of which constitutes a relation between a people and their world, a "culture," if you will. This number, however quickly it may be decreasing, is far too large to imagine covering in this course. Alternatively, we will engage in two groups of texts from distinct traditions—one originating from our environment in the stories of native North American cultures, the other stemming from the "Western" literary influences of the Dracula and Frankenstein myths. Along the way, we will question some of our received notions about myth—the "myths" about myths—allowing us, I hope, to think about the possibilities for myth in our technology-addled universe. And sometimes we will reflect on why it is that we don't much think mythically anymore. Since this course centers on myth, the primary medium of communication will be speech, since myth, in general, implies an oral-based culture. That is, we will approach our subject by attempting to mimic it.

TextsDiamond, Jared. Guns, Germs and Steel.Erdoes and Ortiz. Native American Myths and Legends.Hallett and Karasek. Folk and Fairy Tales.Shelley, Mary. Frankenstein.Stoker, Bram. Dracula.Hacker, Diane. A Pocket Style Manual.

Course Reader, available at the Copy Shop in the Student Union after Labor Day.

Academic honesty: Students are responsible for knowing Eastern Illinois University regulations and policies regarding academic honesty. Plagiarism will likely result in your failing the course and in further action by the university. Here is the English Department's statement on plagiarism:

Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism – "The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's own original work" (Random House Dictionary of the English Language) – has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignments, of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.

Paper Policies

Papers—and all other assignments—are due at the beginning of class. **Late papers will not be commented upon, and be marked a half grade lower for every class period late.** Essays turned in a week past the deadline will be given a “zero.”

Your paper should be stapled and include page numbers. Format: 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with one-inch margins.

Absence Policy:

When you are absent—especially when you are frequently absent—two things happen. First, your participation grade drops substantially. Second, you naturally fall behind in understanding course material and neither the class nor the Professor can catch you up on everything missed in a day's class. YOU need to decide when it is absolutely necessary to miss class. Be wise. It bears repeating: you cannot make up missed work and late assignments will be penalized. Whether these are excused or unexcused absences does not matter for this course. The Professor does not need to have your absences documented or explained.

Emailing Policy:

I want to get to know you and your work this semester. Thus I ask that you call me or stop by my office during office hours (or scheduled times) so that we can talk. **DO NOT EMAIL ME TO ASK FOR AN “UPDATE” ON MISSED ASSIGNMENTS, OR TO EXPLAIN AN ABSENCE.** Working groups will be assigned so that you can contact group members for notes and missed work.

Requirements

All assignments and exams must be turned in to pass the course.

First Summary of Critical Work on Frankenstein: due Tuesday, 05 September (5%)

Second Summary of Critical Work on Dracula: due before the Thanksgiving Break (5%)

Presentation of Summaries: ~ weeks 14-15 (5%)--see below

Exams: Midterm, in week 7 (10%)

Final Exam, during finals week (20%)

Class Participation and Quizzes: see below (20%)

Comparative Paper on North American Myths: ~ Week 9 (10%)

Final Paper on Frankenstein and Dracula: ~ six pages, due on Tuesday, 05 December (25%)

First Paper on Native American Myths (10%)

On a topic (or topics) to be announced, you will write a three-page paper comparing a few myth we have studied in class, or analyzing one of these works in depth.

Critical Summaries and Presentation (15%)

During the semester, I will require you to hand in a summary of two critical works (i.e., secondary sources)—one on Shelley's Frankenstein, the other on Stoker's Dracula. These summaries should be no longer than two pages in length, double-spaced. You must hand in a copy of the summarized articles with your assignment. In the classes immediately following the Thanksgiving Break, I will ask you to give a brief (five-minute) presentation to the class on your two annotated works.

Midterm and Final Exams (10% and 20%, respectively)

The tests will examine your engagement with the class material, through identification and short-answer questions. Before the first exam, we will run through some example questions to familiarize you with my testing tendencies.

Final Paper (25%)

Drawing on your critical readings, you will develop a thesis connecting the two novels we have read in this course. Your task at the end of the semester will be to write a coherent, original analysis of these two

central myths of our literary heritage. I will expect you to reference, with academic grace and bibliographic ease, your critical works, and will encourage you to research further. A few weeks before the paper is due (December 5), you will submit a topic proposal and discuss it with me in at least one conference.

Class Participation and Quizzes (20%)

There will be a number of required, yet ungraded assignments throughout the quarter, constituting a substantial portion your class-participation grade. I will expect you to come to class having read the material, and with questions or comments on the readings. Some of the course material may be quite tough slogging: you should pinpoint specific moments of textual difficulty, and query me ("test" me, if you will) about them. We will have quick, unannounced quizzes throughout the semester at the beginning of class. You cannot "make up" missed quizzes. Late in the semester, I will proctor one additional quiz for those who would like to compensate for having missed a quiz. I will also provide an email forum for post-class discussion. Attendance is not mandatory, but let me add this disclaimer. If you do not attend class without finding an extremely reliable notetaker, you will almost certainly fail the two tests, and your class-participation grade will suffer immensely. Since the final paper will be much easier to write after we discuss the reader materials, your grade for this assignment will likewise be compromised. You are, however, all adults and should be able to use your own judgment vis-à-vis attendance.

Important disclaimers...

Conduct

Instructors are responsible for maintaining order and a positive learning environment in the classroom. Students whose behavior is disruptive either to the instructor or to other students may be required to discontinue course activities and to cancel the course registration (or be disenrolled). In addition, students may be subject to disciplinary action.

Grades

Your instructor sets the requirements and grading criteria for specific assignments. Here are general standards for grades:

- A = Achievement that is outstanding and unique
- B = Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet the requirements
- C = Assignment meets the basic requirements in every respect
- D = Assignment meets only some of the requirements and is worthy of credit
- F = Assignment does not substantially meet the basic requirements

For in-class or other brief writing assignments, you will be graded on a scale of $\sqrt{+}$, $\sqrt{}$, or $\sqrt{-}$. Work that is strongly engaged and on-topic will receive a $\sqrt{+}$. Satisfactory work that is on-topic will receive a $\sqrt{}$. Work that shows little engagement or is off-topic will get a $\sqrt{-}$.

Incompletes

Incompletes are not given except in the most extraordinary circumstances (e.g., medical emergency), which a student must be able to document, and only if just a small part of the course remains to be finished. The student and teacher must make a written agreement concerning the condition of the incomplete.

Cell Phones

All those caught not having turned off their cells and/or other electronic devices will be subject to relentless mockery, public shaming, and, if necessary, unimaginably medieval tortures.